

KONFLIKT IN THE KING

Issue 14

WHEN PICTURES AND SOUND COLLIDE THERE ARE FATALITIES

Pesto of the Film World

The Movies of Italy's Bruno Mattei

The early days of video were interesting as a dumping ground for cinema (especially the horror genre). As I wasn't living in a location which offered grindhouse fare such as 42nd Street, or in Toronto with places such as the "Rio" or the "Roxy", Mom and Pop video stores were where I had to go. They invariably had a sordid selection of strange titles, with video boxes which screamed out with tacky cover art and crudely drawn pictures, all in a vain effort to disguise the chestnuts of films inside.

My first Bruno Mattei film came from one of these store shelves. "The Other Hell" (also known as "Guardian of Hell") was typical fare. With a depiction of a nun holding a dagger on the cover, perhaps painted by some OCA student on mescaline, its back offered a shady description of the contents inside - basically informing us in a paragraph or two that "horrible things are happening in a convent and a priest needs to investigate". That didn't tell me much, but hey, there was a nun holding a dagger on the box and was in the horror section, so down went the cash!

Indeed as the film begins, we see a nun in the basement of what we assume is a monastery, but for some reason, lined with skulls. "Sister Ashunta!" she screams as she roams its hallways in candlelight. Then she bumps into the Sister amongst laboratory equipment which looks like it came off the set of Al Adamson's "Dracula vs. Frankenstein". Sister Ashunta goes on a diatribe about evil between a woman's legs, and the fetus being from the devil while holding some grizzly flesh of some sort, then turns around and stabs the other nun to death. What the hell was this? My first introduction to the cinema of Bruno Mattei!

Born on July 30th, 1931 in Rome, Italy, Mattei has slowly earned the respect of Eurotrash fans, and he's well in the ranks of directors such as Joe D'Amato. In the days of early video, Mattei worked under so many pseudonyms that it's been consistently hard to follow his work and long before the days of the IMDB and the follow-up to the Psychotronic Film Guide, one would have problems following this director's impressive

body of work. ("The Other Hell" is credited as directed by "Stefan Oblowsky".)

The one phenomenon that has diminished of late is when you would run out of watching titles in one video store, you would hit up another Mom and Pop store, then go through their selection. Growing up in Oshawa, home to an abundance of video stores with their selection of smaller studio titles filling in the shelf space for titles that actually rented was one of the reasons I'm sure I came across my next video by Mr. Mattei... RATS.

This time directed by "Vincent Dawn", RATS (1984) was one film that actually worked on my loathing and fear of the creepy rodent. Taking place in 225 AB (After the Bomb), some bikers (including one with the name "Video") take refuge in an abandoned laboratory where there's tons of supplies and lots of "Rats" (primarily guinea pigs coated in a black goop like substance that looks like 10 year old QUIK). Mattei utilizes his use of the zoom lens and there's also one particularly memorable scene where one of the rats eats its way through a women's "you know where" in a sleeping bag. It's since been re-released on DVD and oddly enough seems to be a popular title in pirate form in Asian editions, popping up quite often in North America.

Many times in **KONFLIKT IN THE KING**, I've mentioned my favorite Bruno Mattei flick, "Cruel Jaws" (which came out in the Philippines as "Jaws 5: Cruel Jaws", in VCD format). This time directed under the name "William Snyder", Cruel Jaws is the granddaddy of Jaws ripoffs (look at its name!), and



"Here's the German poster for "Rats". A bomb in Italy, da bomb in the rest of the world!"

also features atrocious dubbing, a wheelchair bound child who has teeth resembling the sharks, and lovers who get chomped during a moonlight swim. Cruel Jaws was made as a TV movie, but for whom? You couldn't rip my copy from my hands! It's classic Mattei.

The one thing consistent of the body of the 40+ films Mattei has directed is that they are ALWAYS entertaining and never boring. Compared to many film-makers today, Mattei takes risks and those entering the world of his work will be transported to an earlier era where the box artwork would give them all the sleazy fun they were looking for on VHS format.

Mattei in an interview once said if there was one thing he wished he could fix with his movies would be to "make them over again". Why he would want to fuck with perfection is beyond me.

I love Bruno Mattei films!

SCRATCHEZ FROM THE D-MAN

Several months ago, I contacted a "major Canadian record label" in regards to attempting to interview a certain "Canadian Hip Hop Artist" in regards to maybe doing an interview or having him answer our "3 Questions" segment. The guy on the other end of the phone seemed fairly enthusiastic in regards to it and asked me send a blurb about my publication, which I was happy to e-mail off within hours.

When weeks passed by, and him on vacation, I got passed onto other persons who were his superior who in turn said they didn't know if the artists management was contacted with questions or what the process of my request was. Then it started. Well, they MIGHT be able to help if I could submit a copy of my magazine and send THEM the questions that I wanted to ask the artist. Sadly the deadline was FAST approaching and I couldn't send them an issue of **KITK** but reluctantly sent them my questions (remember, this is for a Canadian hip-hop artist!) then after prodding closer to the deadline. After some requests YET AGAIN, I was told that my interview request was "declined" as they didn't think their artist would appeal to my readership (which is funny, as they hadn't even seen **KITK**!).

I bring this up in discussion not in bitterness because I was denied an interview with the Canadian hip-hop "star" (the lineup is NEVER short of those I'm interested in interviewing around the world), but one of the problems with major Canadian labels trying to control everything, including what someone would ask them in an interview. Thanks record label homeland security for trying to be a high-baller, but you're not. It's sad for many artists in Canada who are managed by some of these control freaks who are paranoid of them mixing with some form of media that might give them bad press, the artist more often than not receives little, thus adding to the disgustingly growing harem of Canadian one hit wonders.

One of the things you find when you go public with whatever you might be doing artistically is that all of a sudden, you become public domain in the sense that people can gauge what they want how they perceive your work. It's uncontrollable, just like the rest of life.

Working in entertainment is part shell game and part bingo. You never know when your numbers are called, if any at all. It's part determination and still a bit of luck in regards to what you do takes off or how the public perceives it. It's sadly not so cut and paste.

Nothing in life is.

It's funny now that the artist has no media of any sort, which who knows, maybe he had something interesting to say but due to paranoia now has primarily no forum to say it in and predictably will be tossed aside. It's time in Canada and other places to let artists and press do what each of their respective tasks and find talent that will get us out our disposable culture status and progress to longevity. And who knows, you might just get to yell BINGO.

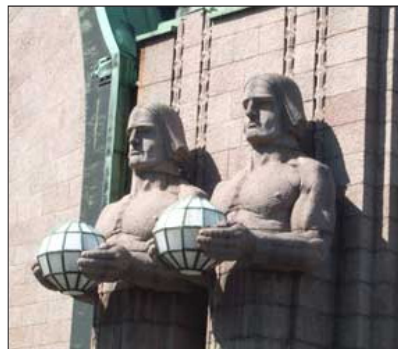
Onto a different topic... As you see, we're back to our original format with interviews with Joey Greco from the TV show "Cheaters", Pekka Malinen from Finn metal favorites "Malicious Death", plus the usual amount of reviews.

Also greetings to everyone that I met on my tour of Virginia and North Carolina, getting to meet lots of nice people for the film screenings and the DJ gig on the first day of broadcasting for Richmond's first indie radio station, WRIR! The screenings were a great success, sometimes turning away two times the capacity of venues. It was great meeting many nice people from cool audience members to those booking in the cities. After being offered whiskey in a mug at Chop Suey Books screening by Ward, it felt just like home!

Look for Issue #15 upcoming in a couple months with the usual interviews and reviews from around the globe. And don't be shy to drop me a line so you don't miss out when we might be in your hood.

See you in spring!

Näin Suomen ja se oli läpi typerien Kanadalaissilmien!



**Hullu kanadalainen ihmettelee
maailman menoa. Nelisivuinen
newsletter. Yksi nro 60 sentin
postimerkillä. Kaksi nroa 90
sentin postimerkillä. 1.30 euron
merkillä jo monta.**

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KONFLIKT IN THE KINO

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To be added to the CONFLICT ARCHIVES
e-mail list or to comment/yammer about
KITK, or to send me Estonian beer, a live
bootleg of the defunct Moscow band
LESBIAN BOY, a VHS copy of "Percy's
Progress" or anything else, contact us at:

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Yuletide in March holla goes to: Stephe
Perry, Jennifer "Correction Girl Friday"
Goldsmith, Richelle Forsey, Matt Pennachi,
Colin "Matroni" Geddes, Cara Draper, Joey
Greco, Pekka Malinen, Alberti, Skip
Elshemer, Zack, Germaine Fodor, Mowey
McDonald, Mike Perju, The Royal and
Equalizing Distort gang, and you for your
continued support. Kiitos!

Photo: Tommy Birchett (Richmond, VA,
on route to a ruins of a Civil War P.O.W.
camp)

Rumours of Helsinki Headbangers

Malicious Death's Pekka Malinen



In Lahti, which doesn't smell like condoms.

Music genres don't really ever die. Sometimes they just go underground, regroup and charge the masses. Almost like Alexander the Great (minus the wives, boy kissing, and bad dialogue), Malicious Death from Helsinki, is amassing a nice sized army of fans and are ready to conquer the world of thrash metal. Their first mini-album "Devilization" made quite a splash in the Baltics and beyond. Their music does capture the element of '80s old school thrash and metal. Their upcoming release, "War and



MD at the Stella Star Club, Circa 2003.

Power" should be out right about now. With high end slow marauding guitar riffs, and a drum beat that's made for a mosh pit, one can understand the buzz around MALICIOUS DEATH. "Billabaldus" from the band (aka Pekka Malinen), when not whoring on his bass or sending me e-mails asking if I can find him some "Slaughter" or "Venom" t-shirts in Toronto's finer thrift shops, has his hands in the manufacturing and distribution of much of Finland's major label music. It's a classic case of Rage against the Suomi-Machinery! It's funny how the tables change as years go by. My first Finnish radio interview was on his radio program in Helsinki talking about my group TINGLER at the time, and now I'm the one asking the questions! Anyhow, we pulled the wide mouth bass-player aside to finally ask him...THE 3 QUESTIONS!

KONFLIKT IN THE KINO (Dion Conflict) / QUESTION #1:

Explain to the average North American listener a brief history of MALICIOUS DEATH, including how it started and what your sound is.

BILLABALDUS: The history starts from few years ago when I and guitarist Obadio had a serious conversation. By the power of pizza and beer we decided to form a thrash metal band. At the time we thought that there weren't too many of those. But now it seems that Finland is full of death/thrash bands. Luckily for us we are not sounding like that

much death metal - we more like to include of 80's speed and thrash into our music that brutal death metal. Me and Jkr were co-workers before the band started so I knew he had great touch in drumming. I never had heard him playing live but somehow I knew that he would be best drummer into this band and that happened he is our motorsoul. RJ came later after few months - and we had songs already. Mr. Anthares from Jumalation sent the guy and in our first rehearsals he showed us that he's the man that we need.

KITK / QUESTION #2:

Tell me about a gig in Finland where you thought either a) Geez, these people smell like used condoms with mac and cheese or b) This audience sucks!

BILLABALDUS: I can't think any other place than Karhula. Our drummer's home town. I think they are just so... hmmm I can't find a word...well, we have played twice there and the audience has sucked both times badly...

KITK / QUESTION #3:

Say all of a sudden, there was a "potato famine" in Finland and you get asked to do a concert with 3 other groups from Suomi (with one Russian) as a benefit for those "living without potatoes". Who would you pick, and why?

BILLABALDUS: Could that be possible? That's too horrible of a thing to happen. I would gather bands that would get the audience to the stadium. So I would not get bands I like - just those that are popular enough. So that would be boring to see for me. Bands like Him, Rasmus and Gimmel probably would get enough people into the stadium and we would get potatoes to eat. Yeah like I would know enough Russian bands but I think NaNa would bring tons of Russian fans. I think this was your dream come true? Truly I would get Jumalation, Pyöveli and Hellbox from Finland because these guys are so great. We would be playing in Factory and get probably like 50 people to see us and we would get drunk and no money left for potatoes. Oh the Russian band could be Shah's reunion gig "Say Hi To Anthrax". Thrash till death.

I guess I can't count on any type of potato famine to happen in the near future, as a gig with Malicious Death with Na-Na would be worth living without potassium for! You can "mosh" your own potatoes with Finland "black metal version of the Osmonds" at www.maliciousdeath.tk.



Robin Hood of the Broken Hearted

Joey Greco from “Cheaters”

I can't help but watch “Cheaters”. Even though I'm not a fan of reality television in general, Cheaters has always held my interest. Sometimes it's the over-the-top narration accompanying the surveillance footage (Example: “The tubby lover takes his intoxicated sweetheart to enjoy some fine pancake fare while she slobbers over a smooch”), and sometimes it's trying to figure out what the cheater in question might look like, especially when his identity is withheld (damn the digital altering of faces!).

More than likely, it's rewarding to see people lying to people they claim to love, having their image plastered on television, all like a plasma kangaroo court. There's nothing like getting caught with your pants down (no pun intended).

Each week host Joey Greco takes us through the world of adultery and at least helps those who have been lied to get some answers. Could he be the television equivalent of Robin Hood or is he best thought of as an insurance adjuster for the broken hearted?

We spoke with him shortly before the launch of “Cheaters Strip” to find out more about Greco. The man who holds the video camera showing the surveillance footage for those who are looking for answers.

He supplied some for us too.



Photo: Akhtar Hussein

KONFLIKT IN THE KING (Dion Conflict): How did you get the gig at “Cheaters”?

JOEY GRECO: So...it's a rainy Saturday night and rather than go out, I have some friends over at my house. The phone rings and it's my agent, who asks if I'd be interested in auditioning for a TV show, and how soon could I be down to the studio. I leave everyone at my home (perhaps not the most judicious decision!), go audition and the rest is pretty evident.

KITK: Had you seen the show beforehand?

JOEY GRECO: Up until that point I had not really seen the show. It's air time was pretty late in our market at that time.

KITK: Tell us about your first episode and dealing with the people involved with conflict. Did you find it difficult to be thrown in a situation with complex emotions going on in both ends?

JOEY GRECO: If I remember correctly, in my first episode I ended up on my butt, tossed aside by our own client in an attempt to get to the other gentleman involved in the situation! So, yes, I've found that these conflicts present unique challenges that due to the differences in how people react, prohibit anything from being constant.

KITK: Did a previous job or studies in a certain field (or background) come into play in regards with how you've dealt with the situations on “Cheaters”? How so?

JOEY GRECO: Having degrees in Psychology and Education/Counseling definitely gives me a certain perspective on the situations that Cheaters presents. The most prevalent being that the events that we deal with are more “symptoms” of a greater issue than the ones that brought us there. It's easy to look at the actions and be angered by the consequence of those decisions, but looking deeper than that is the real challenge these individuals will face.

KITK: You might not be able to get into the exact details for legal reasons, but could you tell our readers about what exactly happened when you got stabbed on the boat, and what was going through your mind during this strange incident.

JOEY GRECO: I'm unable to go into detail, but I can distinctly remember asking myself “what are you doing here?”

KITK: A friend pointed out to me that it seems that when a guy will find out his girlfriend is cheating on him with another girl, the ladies in lesbian relationships are always meaner saying things like “You couldn't satisfy me! That's why I'm with her!” Have you found this?

JOEY GRECO: I don't really know if I can say that one gender tends to be more vicious than another. I do feel that most will do their best to rationalize or justify their behavior, which sometimes includes cruelty

of epic magnitudes. After all, what would be more emasculating for a man then to hear that he was so inept, that he drove his girlfriend into the arms of another woman?

KITK: Where do you think “Cheaters” stands in the grand scale of television and it's place in society?

JOEY GRECO: Now that's a tough one! In the grand scale of television, I believe that while Cheaters reflects only a small piece of our society's behavior, it does represent a prevalent “me first” attitude that abounds. Hopefully, by exposing the results of this sentiment, people will think more about how their decisions will effect others around them.

KITK: Let's change gears here and talk a little about you. Where did you grow up? What's your background?

JOEY GRECO: I was raised in the Northeastern US. I've discussed my education earlier, but have also worked extensively in the Sports/Fitness training industry, which also is what gave me my start in broadcast television. I used to Co-Host a show on ESPN, which if you've ever seen yourself on camera, you know what a humbling experience that can be. After our first season, I knew I'd better get into some acting classes fast! From there, I took one, then another, and another, and another...until I find myself where I am today.

KITK: Are you an avid collector of anything?

JOEY GRECO: Yes, debt. Particularly since I'm remodeling my house! Other than that, not really but I do golf quite a bit.

KITK: Have you ever been to either Canada or Finland before?

JOEY GRECO: I've been fortunate to travel extensively to each country. This includes getting a concussion & whiplash snowboarding in Canada, and getting lost in Finland, alone, driving my friend's car. Couldn't read a sign or understand a thing, but I found my way eventually, although it was from the other side of the mountain!

KITK: Say all of a sudden, I showed up at your door with a tractor and a flatbed loaded up with hay and said “Joey! It's time for a hayride!” The catch would be you had to invite someone from the US government along with whoever else you wanted. Who would you pick to join you on the hayride and why?

JOEY GRECO: At this point I think I'd have to say Condoleezza Rice, to find out her opinion on the direction our nation is headed and her plans for the future. More specifically, will she be taking on Hillary Clinton head to head in our next election.

KITK: Last question, and many people have wanted me to ask you this. What's your marital status and have YOU been cheated on?

JOEY GRECO: Single, and to borrow a phrase from many of the people I seem to come across, “how do you define cheating?”!

THE SOCK AND THE SOUTH

How Ed the Sock and Much Music played into my Southern tour

Television is a strange thing sometimes. Working primarily behind the scenes, you often don't tend to think about the end product or for those who are in front of the camera that bring everything all the elements of your days work to light, each time your show or network is on air. This is something that after some time was lost on me.

The phone rings one day from my friend Matt who asked if I would be interested in being on Canada's most popular music video channel, MUCH MUSIC (now coolly referred to on air as just MUCH). "They need someone to be on their version of 'The Apprentice' with Ed the Sock. He (referring to the sock-puppet) will just insult you lots and that's about it". Having a lonely night home watching a Cheaters rerun and eating Loblaw's roast chicken was the only thing on my docket for the evening, so I accepted. Forgetting about the affair later on in the evening, my Nokia rings while holding a roast chicken in my hand looking at a Supermarket DVD copy of "The Best of Times". Colin, a producer at MUCH needed me to be there before their live broadcast of the nightly show, "Much on Demand" (referred to as M.O.D.).

After security stalling me at the front entrance, I was on set and felt for the first time in my life, OLD! Seven other people were informed that we would be doing a contest to win "The Edprentice", the official underlink of Ed the Sock. Manny the floor director said we might actually win a prize too. The lights went up as the bubbly VJ Rick Campanelli comes out with the Burlesque-influenced sock puppet and asks each of us to tell something about ourselves. The other kids on the panel say such deep things like "I'm from Woodbridge" or "I was here last week". During my turn, I calmly tell Ed and the TV viewers "My name is Dion Conflict. I present movies and spin Finnish hip-hop", which has them looking baffled. On air talent later ask if I'm being serious about this and invite them to my next DJ gig for the Finnish/Canadian community the following evening. Each time the saucy sock puppet interviews us, the competition is dwindled down to two people. A perky 18 year old named Sofia, and well, me. We're asked to come back next week and each given a "task" to complete, just like Donald Trump's show.

My task is to get into a radio station, get on air, and plug Ed the Sock and Much on Demand. Sadly, I can't call up any beforehand. So, dragging my MUCH producer along, I tell radio stations that he's my college friend "Numan the Video Nut" and how I arranged with the station manager that I would quickly go on air to propose to my girlfriend, who about to be deployed on a Canadian peacekeeping mission to Kabul. This doesn't really work until I end up going on a community radio station during pledge week and ask if I can go on air and offer free tickets for my screenings for a pledge (and donate money to the station the producer gave me). On a jazz show that seemed to be oddly anti corporate, somehow I name drop ED THE SOCK over and over until the host said, "What's with you and Ed the Sock!?" We also tape some

footage of me in a studio talking about what type of records I spin and trash talk my competitor, Sofia, who I refer to over and over as "Dollar store baby girl" for the cameras. Sofia was to meet a "movie star" and get her picture taken with him on the set.

Next week I'm back at MUCH, thinking we would be wrapping up my 15 minutes of fame with VJ Evan and Ed by showing clips of Dollar Store Baby Girl and myself doing our tasks. The segments were great, intercut with Sofia trashing me saying "Dion doesn't have the smarts like me" and me replying with "Your perkiness will only get you so far, but it sure will sell lots of Tupperware". Sofia kind of did her task as well, meeting some actor named John Seda who I claimed on air was an extra. Who did the job best? Ed couldn't decide, so we were asked to return for a following week.

WEEK THREE has Ed the Sock giving us three tasks including insulting people on the street (I do it under my breath taking the TTC!), giving a review of a musical artist I hate (just one?) and "kissing ass" to Ed in a Speakers Corner booth, while inside I comment that "I've been in clean peep show booths before" which happily makes it's cut to TV. Our usual Friday appearance is pushed back, because Avril Lavigne is in town and wants to chat on MUCH. So, the finals are pushed one more week.

As the finals draw near, the rumors flourish that not only is the winner crowned "The Edprentice", but also wins an IPOD. After coming this far and having Canada see me say such fine soundbites as "I can sneak my way into anything, and if that doesn't work out (pause), I'll put out" and admit to kissing an adult film star, that IPOD had better be mine.

It was! And now the title of Ed's

apprentice (whatever that meant!) was mine. Sofia got a DVD player and some Brittany Spears perfume and the experience was over. But not quite yet, as I learned MANY channel surf. While at work, one woman who did a double take of me in the coffee room goes "Oh my Gawd! Are you Dion Conflict the Finnish DJ?" which almost had me barelling over in laughter, ditto people in TTC cars giving me the "thumbs up".

Luckily for the IPOD. Wanting to win it, I still had no idea what to do WITH it. But the IPOD translated into some cash which helped with my plane ticket, the one that secured my Southern tour. I'm sure Ed would understand, and the audiences in Virginia and North Carolina loved the story as to how I got there.

It's funny that the whole experience gave me a little taste of what I almost had forgotten about was the output of my day to day work activities of making a finished visual product and the many elements involved getting it to the viewer. It's pretty much what I want to do behind the camera as well. Either way, it boils down to entertainment or anything else we do. But thanks to MUCH, the sock and the IPOD, a little good natured ribbing helped secure my Southern tour. How many people can say that?



After the cameras stop rolling with MUCH VJ Rick Campanelli and Dion.

JUNK

APULANTA "PUDOTA"

Levy-yhtiö

APULANTA has released one of their best CD singles in years! "Vasten mun kasvojani" begins with the riffs that add to a buildup before Toni starts laying into a screeching chorus. "Aamen" begins like soft porn music, but then goes into typical Apulanta territory. "Yksi toisensa jälkeen" is both thrashy, fast, and reminiscent of singles before the breakthrough "Kolme" album. APULANTA seems to be touring all over Finland right now, so I'm hoping a new album should be out shortly. After hearing this material, it will be yet another one to anticipate!



AKCENT "Poveste de Viata"

Roton

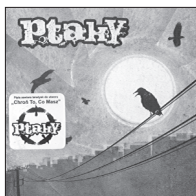
The 4th album by this Romanian boy band (they wear too much black eyeliner) actually has some catchy tracks including a Middle Eastern influenced "Spune-mi" which is catchy as hell. "S-ajung o stea" has the AKCENT boys harmonizing with an unusual bridge in the middle of dialogue in a club or cafe. "Poveste de viata" (the name of the first track and the video which is also included on the CD) only contains six tracks so the disc takes you in and out of the world of AKCENT very quickly. A good job, but leave the eyeliner at home next time (ESPECIALLY you Sorin!).



PtakY "self titled"

Sony Music Polska

You can almost picture some greedy little exec rubbing his hands together at Sony Poland thinking he's created some awesome new band. PtakY isn't new and anyone who's listened to Polish rock will just think it sounds like a second coming of ILLUSION. Technically, it's all good but from their "look" all the way down to their sound, there's something about it not to trust. Sure, tracks such as "Chroń To, Co masz" (which was also featured in the Polish version of SPIDERMAN 2) are good but the whole album is a little too safe, a little too by the book... a LOT too obvious. About as bland as drinking Tomato "sok" without any salt. Poland's answer to PEARL JAM? Let's hope not!



PRAF IN OCHI - "P.I.O."

Cat Music / Bravo

On my top 10 favourite CDs list of 2004 - easily! Romania's PRAF IN OCHI starts out with acoustic vibes ending with a power chord assault with the debut track, "In Minte Mea". All track tend to build on intensity and by "Innebunesc", everything gets loud and off the hook. There's a little crossover action with "Rda Vs. Oxi" (which is in English, and the lyrics translate well). It all ends with a nice piano based outro. "P.I.O." shines with energy, rich ideas, and catchy chords. At least it's not so generic as ALEXISONFIRE or some other crap like that. (Also anyone with a copy of their MTV Romania concert, please contact me and I'll reward you nicely). Finally, kids that actually GET it!

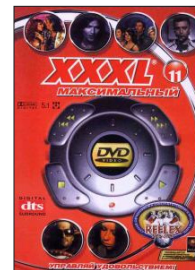


XXXL 11 "Максимальный" (2004)

Starring: Various

Director: Various

This 11th installment is an assortment of Russian music videos from the XXXL series. It's good for me they are getting easier for me to find, but there only a couple really good videos on the DVD. It starts with Reflex's excellent video for "Нон-стоп" complete with a blood infused soccer match replicating something out of Death Race 2000, and finally I get a mix of Пракін doing "Полночь Парнж", but not a duet as previous Fabrika viewers might have remember from the 4th installment of that series. Пракін drives around a futuristic city with vivid red colors. Meanwhile, Юлия Савчуева has a video VERY low key and a simple ballad that unlike many ballads, works. After that, the DVD is crammed with so much female ballads, that it seems like Russian karaoke gone mad. But for me, those three videos alone were gold!



HIP HOP SHOP 2004 - "v/a"

ST3 Productions

Compilations are similar to window shopping. You brose through items with some you find and some you like. HIP HOP SHOP 2004 offers some Russian thug bustin rhymes that sometimes work, and sometimes don't. The CD comprises work by artists from both 2003-2004 from the label and oddly enough, the newer material doesn't really break any new ground as far as Russian hip-hop goes. The older stuff in the 2003 half fares much better with track by 63 пернох, Big Black Boots, на'к, and R@MAIL, who reminds me of a Russian version of ja rule, but not as annoying. Too bad they almost make a mockery out of the genre with a stupid track such as Mike Mutantoff's "Hip hop and Weed", which like this weed should have been pulled from this CD. HIP HOP SHOP does provide some interesting things, but that is only if you're actually looking within it's cd storefront.



Бумер - "Original Soundtrack"

"Bumer" (meaning in English "Boom") still hasn't been offered on DVD with English subtitles, so I've still yet to see this Russian car hijacking epic. But the soundtrack has basically almost every type of genre covered from Reggae, industrial, jungle, and of course Cossack. Сюр offer the best nitrous driven (and very loud) tracks right off the bat, while Сепрен Шипров do a wonderfully screechy accordion based traditional with "Мама, ХАЙНБАН!". There's even a track that mixes a polyphonic ringtone with accordion. It's a good soundtrack littered with samples from the movie bouncing genres while still having some form of consistency on the disc. Nitrus enthused all the way!



I.F.K. - "2004"

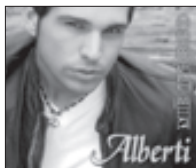
PMPMA Russia

UN-FUCKING-BELIEVABLE! For close to a decade, I've been a fan of theirs and would put their 2nd effort into my top 5 of best Russian CD's from the nineties easily. But their last effort was leaning on the lazy side. The design is no hell, but the CD itself is excellent and makes garbage such as LINKIN PARK sound like JESSICA SIMPSON. There is not ONE track off this CD that's bad. I.F.K. returns as well with their trademark tempo changes and marauding buildup which then change into an all out thrash assault. And even for the genre, the lead can sing! Good...Good...and even better!



ALBERTI - "Më Trego"
Zico Company

"Më Trego" did very well on the video charts for this Albanian-American pop artist in Kosovo and surrounding areas, and his follow up with a complete album does not disappoint. The title track begins then we go into a HOT mix with "Dilemma" (a duet with TUNA), then more catchy territory filled with hooks, sometimes slowing down (the end track combining piano with a Carpenters style "acid guitar licks". The mix of "Përrallë E Dashurisë" (which runs much different than the one Albanian viewers might have seen on the Gësuar 2004 show) combines a rich traditional influenced melody with electronic energy and classic strings. Alberti's album definitely bumps up the quality of Alba pop albums, and is the most catchy Albanian CD so far this year. Yo Blero? Shpat? Adrian G? Can you top this?



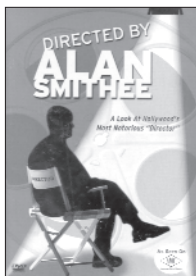
PIKKU G - "Kylki kyljessä"
Warner Finland / King Size / Royal Family

Don't tell, but I'm listening to PIKKU G's single after they gave us champagne at work, so I feel kind of weird. As far as Finn kid rappers go, he's a little bit better than Raimssi. "Kylki kyljessä" is OK as it doesn't go the "cutesy kid" route favoured by some former Finn kid artists (See: Jam Jam). The other track on this CD single (Kaikki Baussaa) is a live mix from YLEX-POP which interestingly enough sounds like someone held an old Phillips tape recorder up to a television speaker and pressed record. Should I be reviewing stuff after drinking red champagne? Maybe not - because it's sounding like fun! At least the kid has some speed in his rhymes for what it's worth. Where's the bubbly again?



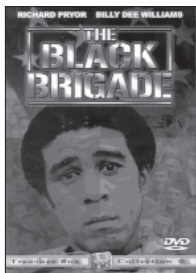
DIRECTED BY ALAN SMITHEE (2002)
Starring: Martha Coolidge, Tony Kaye, Arthur Hillier
Director: Lesli Klainberg

This excellent documentary tells the complete story of the legend we know as Alan Smithee, the directing pseudonym which use to be used by film-makers that didn't want their name attached to the end result. From Smithee's beginning directing "Death of a Gunfighter" (which spawned the name) to Martha Coolidge who explains why it is no longer used. American History "X" director Tony Kaye discusses how he wanted to use it due to infighting with Edward Norton over the finished cut of "X" (at one point he wanted to use "Humpty Dumpty" as his directing credit). It's too bad Smithee's name can't be used anymore, as I actually like some of "his" work (Big fan here of "Morgan Stewart's Coming Home!"). It's a good little documentary made for American Movie Classics. The DVD extras contain some lame b-roll, but still an enticing documentary for it's budget minded price tag.



THE BLACK BRIGADE (1970)
Starring: Rosy Grier, Richard Pryor, Billy Dee Williams
Director: George McCowan

Captain Beau Carter (Stephen Boyd, later in Lady Dracula) a borderline racist is given command of an all-black brigade (including the likes of Roosevelt Grier, Richard Pryor and Billy Dee Williams) to guard a bridge/dam passing during World War 2. The best line is one of the brothers resistant of Carter proclaiming "We don't need no white man!" It's pretty bland as far as action films or seventies TV fare goes, but Pryor actually delivers an excellent dramatic performance. Aaron Spelling produced this title,



which I picked up on DVD for about \$1.

CATHY'S CURSE (Canada/France 1977)
Starring: Randi Allen, Alan Scarfe
Director: Eddy Matalon

If you're looking for a very cheap Exorcist rip-off filmed in Montreal, look no further than this obvious shelter. A family moves into a house where Cathy (blond haired Randi Allen) becomes possessed by her dead aunt. During one scene with the family handyman, the possessed Cathy keeps calling a psychic who stops by to visit her mentally ill Mother "Stupid Whore!" repeatedly. Maybe Cathy wasn't possessed at all and just needed a coupla handfuls of Ritalin to stand being in this poorly edited mess which almost ventures onto surrealism as there's virtually no flow from scene to scene. The print on the DVD I purchased looks like it came from an algae infested fish tank. I pity the aquarium!



THE SEVERED ARM (1973)
Starring: Deborah Walley, Marvin Kaplan
Director: Thomas S. Alderman

My super 8 projector broke while watching the first reel of this horror film, and eventually picked it up recently on DVD. Miners trapped in a cave (including the goofy guy from the TV show "Alice") cut off one of the arms of one of the miners to survive, then suddenly they are rescued! Afterwards, it seems the victim is trying to seek revenge and perhaps only the accused armless man's daughter (Deborah Whalley with black hair) can help out the survivors. Revenge



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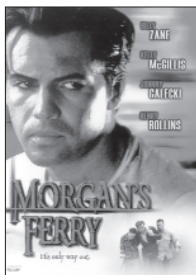
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stories are great, but this one doesn't seem to pick up and run with the idea which is a good one, and it ends with a sloppy way of putting lipstick on the pig. "The Severed Arm" could have been so much better. Too bad many of it's tendons are severed within it's washy script.

MORGAN'S FERRY (1989)

Starring: Billy Zane, Kelly McGillis, Henry Rollins

Director: Sam Pillsbury

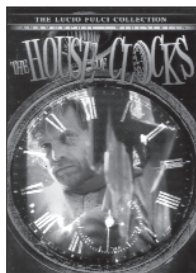


Three escaped convicts stumble upon a strange recluse (Kelly McGillis, who is almost unrecognizable) who reluctantly takes them in after they unsuccessfully attempt to rob the crazed old coot. Meanwhile, Billy Zane and Kelly McGillis form a relationship in the loosest meaning of the word, just before he gets to leave rural Louisiana, hopefully on a ferry. Some might enjoy seeing Henry Rollins buck naked, but the film has the intensity of a vintage Pepperidge Farm commercial. It's a story that's been told many times before, and this time suffers from an even more banal treatment, with a script that pretty much stays docked its entire duration.

THE HOUSE OF CLOCKS (Italy 1989)

Starring: Keith Van Hoven, Paola Paoloni

Director: Lucio Fulci



This Italian TV production circulated for quite some time in video grey markets with copies coming from a Japanese VCD. Now Fulci enthusiasts can now check out this DVD complete with interviews. After an elderly clock collector and his wife kill a maid, they are visited by some trashy Italian neo-punks (smoking pot, and who also suffocate a black cat in a shopping bag) and get killed by them, when the clocks stop and start turning back, when all the weird things happen. Fulci lost me when the elderly Vittorio (Paoloni) keeps referring to his clocks as his "little children" (oh brother!). Fulci's trademark zooms and "Vaseline on the lens" elements are all over this made for TV film that was shelved because it was too violent (or just so-so). There's a poorly taped interview with Carla Cassolo, who says Fulci treated actors like shit and basically buried her alive for a scene in Clocks for close to 30 minutes!

INVASION OF THE BLOOD FARMERS (1972)

Starring: Norman Kelly, Tana Hunter,

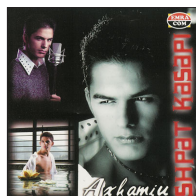
Director: Ed Adlum



A druid cult in Upstate NY drains blood out of people which looks like Faygo Red Pop? That's what this amateur film would have you believe! There's also a young couple (Jenny and Don) who give a particle board line delivery professing their love, tons of paneling in sets, and a Queen in some type of casket/viewing box which looks like some junk gold tin foiled prop thrown in the trash after a TRADING PLACES shoot. Very bad, but quite entertaining! Retromedia use the original negs for the transfer and the movie trailer for "Blood Farmers" seems overtly long. This was directed by someone involved in publishing industry magazines on jukeboxes.

SHPAT KASAPI – "Axhamiu"

Emra-Com



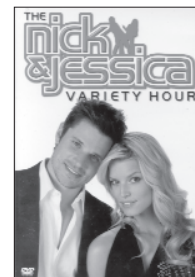
"Axhamiu" would easily be my favorite video of 2004 for both the song (the title and first track) and music make for good Albanian-influenced pop by the dashing looking lad. While the 2nd track titled "Sa e Sa Mëkate", you'd almost feel Kasapi venturing into

Bollywood territory. If it sounds like he's doing a track for a film such as "Kuch Kuch Hota Hei", it's briefly. Axhamiu, Shpat's 2nd album provides the listener with traditional influenced tracks, fused by snare-influenced baselines. "Moj Çupe", "Kthetu Shpirt", and "Nuk Mundem Pa Ty" all take the viewer on an interesting aural adventure beyond the streets of Kosovo.

THE NICK AND JESSICA VARIETY HOUR (2004)

Starring: Nick Lachey, Jessica Simpson

Director: Gary Halvorson



If you haven't seen this TV special which was released on DVD by the same company that has released "The Corpse Grinders", run (don't walk) to buy a copy of this instant Polaroid of pop culture and a visual car wreck we can't help but look at. Mr. T pretends to be Jessica and try to kiss Nick in a sketch. Jessica sings with JEWEL and also sings "Islands in the Stream" with Kenny Rogers. Nick smashes bottles over his head in a saloon. Miss Piggy tells Kermit she's not a fan of the reality show "The Newlyweds". Nick also does a duet with KITT, the talking car from KNIGHT RIDER. It's almost like dinner theatre after downing Zantax with a couple chugs of JOLT, and oddly enough, one of the more entertaining hours on TV last year during reality-infused network television (which isn't saying much, and I'm not including PBS!). Why, Jessica acts just as good in this as she does her Pizza Hut commercials!

TINGULLI 3 - "3NT"

Zico Company



One of the best hip-hop CD's from Kosovo last year, and one that as a whole album feels like it takes you from point A to B, compared to many slap-happy and poorly designed Albanian CD's.

I've spun the excellent "Shumë Lojë Një Lloj", which has old skool jacks going but still is a great track. "I trent" has a vibe that might have it playing in the Galan version of "Pimp My Ride" (being a plus!), while I'd kill to work on a video for the somewhat traditional orchestrated "Vesa". It's excellent design stands out, along with the contents inside covering a gambit of styles. Muti, it's superior!



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